



Los Padres National Forest

Figueroa Mountain Wildflower Update

Update for late March/early April 2013



Hello Again! The wildflowers are in quite a hurry this year. Perhaps because of the lack of rain or maybe they know something we don't. The infamous poppy/lupine hillside has gone to seed and witch's hair has taken over. The new growth that was there 2 weeks ago has dried up, so my hopes for multiple peaks vanished with the dry, warm weather. However, merely a few feet further, the poppies and bush lupine are incredible in this same section. But I wouldn't wait long. Again, they do appear to be in a rush. Let's begin our tour.

Starting at the first cattle guard, buttercups, milk maids, lomatium, shooting stars, popcorn flower, hummingbird sage, Johnny jump-ups, blue dicks, fiesta flowers and lupine are in bloom. As one makes the turn along the second bend, on the left, lovely pink owl's clover, lomatium, blue dicks and fillaree can be found. On the right, look for red Indian paintbrush, popcorn flower, shooting stars, miniature lupine, Johnny jump-ups and fillaree. Twenty yards further, on the right, shooting stars, lupine and lomatium are present. Another 25 yards down the road will bring you to a slope on the left where sky lupine and miniature lupine are adorning the slope. As one continues under the tree canopy, look for buttercups, milk maids, Johnny jump-ups, shooting stars, fiesta flowers, humming bird sage and popcorn flowers as they show off their beautiful array of colors.

As you continue up the hill, check out the bright orange California poppies blooming throughout the mountain. As you get to the rusty poles on the right, look on the ground and find some dainty cream cups.

Other wildflowers to look for as you continue your uphill climb include prickly phlox on the serpentine walls on the right, miners lettuce, lomatium, buttercups, royal lupine, fiddle neck, Johnny jump-ups, shooting stars, goldfields, coreopsis, miniature lupine, California poppies, blue dicks, star lilies, red clover, wall flowers, wild onions and fillaree. The Ceanothus is rapidly departing for the season.

At Vista Point (large gravel turnout about 11.4 miles from the bottom), beautiful chocolate lilies are still in bloom. Shooting stars, goldfields, fillaree, lomatium, blue dicks, blue-eyed grass, California poppies and buttercups can be found. In the serpentine area across the road, you'll see California poppies, coreopsis, fillaree, lomatium, royal lupine, miniature lupine, blue-globe gillias and shooting stars.

Beyond the station, bush lupine is filling in beautifully. Shooting stars can be found along with bright orange wall flowers on the rocky area, right before Tunnell Road.

About a half mile beyond the fire station, as I mentioned before, the infamous poppy/lupine hillside has gone to seed and has been replaced by witch's hair. But don't stop there! Go just a few feet further up the road where the poppies and bush lupine are embellishing both sides of the road, along with the hillsides. Other flowers to see in this area include sky lupine, phacelias and blue-globe gillias.

If you venture up the Lookout Road, lupine and poppies are filling the hillsides. This year it is mostly lupine, but it is still absolutely magnificent. The lupine's breath taking aroma fills the air. If you do go up the Lookout Road, please be careful as this is a narrow, winding, dirt road.

Beyond the campground, along the corridor that leads to the Davy Brown Trailhead, look for sky lupine, poppies, blue-globe gillias, bush lupine, buttercups, chia and phacelias.

Beyond the trailhead, shooting stars, buttercups, goldfields and chocolate lilies are visible throughout this stretch. As you approach the rocky outcrop on the left, look for beautiful Red Indian paintbrush.

Right as you start heading up Ranger Peak, whimsical baby blue eyes once again peep out of the tall grass to say "I'm here." Look for more baby blue eyes, miner's lettuce and fiddleneck in the shady areas of Ranger Peak.

From Ranger Peak to Cachuma Saddle, the wildflowers are really putting on a show. Stunning yellow bush poppies and bush lupine are rapidly blooming throughout this corridor. Poppies, purple nightshade, phacelias, black sage, wild canyon peas, sky lupine and Indian paintbrush can also be spotted.

Sunset Valley is also unveiling their gorgeous bush lupine and bush poppies. Popcorn flower, baby blue eyes, buttercups, milk thistle, sky lupine, miniature lupine and coulter lupine can also be found.

Happy Canyon had a wildflower explosion since the last time we met. Aside of bush lupine, bush poppies, sky lupine and California poppies, which are blooming in leaps and bounds, vetch, fuchsia flowering gooseberries, pink flowering currant, clematis, royal lupine, blue dicks, fiesta flowers, miner's lettuce and wild canyon peas are in bloom. Right across what used to be Cachuma Campground, look for stunning, purple fiesta flowers and just beyond on the rocky section to the right, keep an eye out for Indian paintbrush, prickly phlox and wild canyon peas.

As you continue your descent down the mountain, again, look for California poppies, bush lupine, bush poppies, prickly phlox, shooting stars, phacelias, canyon peas, blue dicks, fiesta flowers, chia and even mariposa lilies as they are beginning their bloom for the season.

That's all for this update. Look for our next wildflower update in two weeks. Until then, happy viewing! For more information, please contact Helen Tarbet at 805-925-9538, ext. 246, or by e-mail at htarbet@fs.fed.us.



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